

Washington, D.C. Today, the House of Representatives considered HR 3685, the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA), which prohibits employers from hiring, firing, altering compensation, segregating, classifying, or refusing to refer an employee based on that person's actual or perceived sexual orientation. The bill does not establish employment or membership quotas, and the bill's provisions do not apply to the armed forces or religious organizations. Congressman Sanford D. Bishop, Jr., who supported the legislation, gave the following remarks during debate on the bill:

“Madame Chair:

As one who has suffered the stigma and painful effects of state-enforced legal discrimination based on my race for the first 20 of my 60 years; and having spent all of my professional life as an attorney and elected official fighting to eradicate unlawful discrimination based on race, creed, color, religion, gender, age, disability or national origin; and based on my study and understanding of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, I cannot condone discrimination in employment based on sexual orientation.

The only appropriate consideration in employment should be the willingness and ability to perform the job.

Sexual orientation, unless it absolutely affects job performance, is a private matter and should not be a basis for legal discrimination, with the possible exception of the armed services and religious organizations.

Accordingly, and after prayerful consideration, I must therefore support HR 3685, the Employment Non-Discrimination Act.”